

THE TALON

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM 03 - 07



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September 2006
Vol. 1 No. 6

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Brigade Public Affairs Officer.....	MAJ Michael T. Naifeh
Talon Illustrator.....	SPC Lucas I. Baldwin
Task Force Public Affairs NCOIC.....	SPC W. Michael Howard
Talon Layout.....	SPC W. Michael Howard

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Task Force Runner spent a year in Iraq, enabling communications and network operations for Soldiers deployed throughout the theater.



REFLECTING ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF TASK FORCE ADLER

COL Frederick A. Cross

It has been my extreme honor to lead the greatest Soldiers in the Army during combat and combat support operations here in Iraq. In the beginning I asked you to give me your very best in order to ensure success across the full

spectrum of the battlefield. The Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Soldiers and Civilians of Task Force Adler answered that call and proudly soared like eagles in the accomplishment of the mission. I cannot be more pleased than I

am now in all the things that the Soldiers of Task Force Adler have accomplished. I want to personally thank HHC 22d Signal Brigade, 440th Signal Battalion, 32nd Signal Battalion, 29th Signal Battalion, 136th Signal Battalion (Texas

ARNG), 842nd Signal Company (USAR), Charlie and Delta Companies 40th Signal Battalion, and the families of all the Soldiers for your professionalism, commitment to excellence and teamwork. You truly made Task Force Adler the



“Team of Teams.”

It is impossible to separate the Warrior from the Signal Technician because both are integral to being a Soldier within Task Force Adler. As we close this chapter of our lineage and standby for a change of mission, I want everyone to clearly understand the enormous effort you made to simply get the job done. At the time of our transfer of authority you will have transferred and completed some amazing missions; far too many to capture here, so I will focus on the Signal or communications highlights and I have asked my CSM to talk to the Warrior.

Task Force Adler’s Soldiers as-

sumed command and control of the most complex tactical and strategic communications network ever installed. Spanning over 165,000 square miles, it proved to be the largest tactical network in Army history. This highly reliable communications network supported the entire Iraqi Theater of Operations. Overall, 130,000 users received voice, video, and data services from networks managed by the task force. To do this, the Task Force utilized a multitude of different solutions leveraging the emergence of IP radios, Free Space Optics (FSO) camera systems and various other commercial off-the-shelf equipment; providing an average of

50 megabytes of bandwidth allowing users a seamless integration into the strategic network for services – a significant increase in comparison to the capabilities of legacy MSE equipment. Through resourceful creative thinking brigade engineers developed new Line of Sight radio solution that utilized existing legacy equipment to emplace commercial solutions; further enabling a significant reduction of Signal Soldiers needed to accomplish the mission.

Signal Soldiers from Task Force Adler successfully installed and maintained over 50 strategic and tactical commercial servers valued at over \$25 million dollars, which are on three separate networks. Capabilities of the servers included 12 Terabytes of storage and 23 Terabytes of backup storage. The Brigade supported over 17,000 network accounts and 8,000 computer accounts, including 4,000 Coalition customers; all of this while successfully processing an average of 607,950 e-mails per week and maintaining 99.4% server reliability. These achievements were made possible only through the Task Forces' successes in providing commercial-grade fiber, copper termination and patch panel distribution, and



several to support them. Commercialization teams successfully completed over 100 fiber runs with over 30 miles of fiber

cable; terminated over 1,600 fiber stands to a commercial standard; installed Area Distribution Nodes (ADN); com-

pletely rewired numerous buildings; and configured and installed Cisco 2600 and 3700-series routers and switches with Unin-

terrupted Power Supply (UPS) systems providing access to three separate networks (NIPR, SIPR, CENTRIXS).

Perhaps one of our most significant long-term contributions was the establishment of the Joint NetOps Control

Center - Iraq (JNCC-I). The JNCC-I is the focal point for all network monitoring and engineering in the Iraqi theater; re-

sulting in improved use of multi-echelon manpower and enhanced engineering and planning capabilities.

One of the pillars to our success over the past year is rooted in maximizing the technical abilities of our Soldiers; our Baghdad University program has played a key role in building those capabilities. While Task Force Adler managed BSU, over 600 Signal Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and civilians received training. Courses ranged from basic to advanced network training, PROM-INA familiarization, SMART-T training, JNTC training, fiber installation, TROPO operations, CISCO VoIP phone technology, REDCOM telephone switch operation, JNN, TCF maintenance, and Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) operations. Training provided at BSU resulted in improved management of the MNC-I network and accelerated infrastructure build-outs throughout the ITO.

I am proud to be your Task Force Commander. Task Force Adler and the 22D Signal Brigade has left a tremendous legacy in Iraq for other Signalers to build upon. You have set the standard for multi-discipline, full spectrum Signal Support for Combatant Commanders.



By CSM Thomas J. Clark

I want to thank the Soldiers of Task Force Adler (the 440th Signal Battalion, 29th Signal Battalion, 136th Signal Battalion (Texas ARNG), 842nd Signal Company (USAR), and Charlie and Delta Companies from the 40th Signal Battalion) and their families. Your professionalism made it easy to be the Task Force Sergeant Major.

The Task Force safely deployed over 3,000 Soldiers from two bases in Germany, and three different areas

in the continental United States.

The Brigade's highly reliable communications network supported the entire Iraqi Theater of Operations. Everyone knows the task force knows Signal like Michael Jordan knows basketball and they are just as professional in their execution of that task. COL Cross talked this piece in his article, and has asked me to tell you how these same Signal Soldiers preformed as warriors on the battlefield.

During the deployment, Task Force Adler Soldiers conducted over 300 convoys totaling over 175, 000 miles. The high rate of safely completed convoys directly reflects the professionalism and competence of the Task Force Soldiers and Leaders. Pre-combat checks, rehearsals, and detailed planning contributed to the unit's high rate of safely completed operational and operational convoy missions.

Soldiers from Task Force Adler, Along with Multi-

National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MN-STC-I), and other Coalition forces worked as a team to construct the first joint operated Iraqi Signal School (ISS), in Taji, Iraq. Working directly with the Iraqi Army, this small team of Task Force Adler Signal subject matter experts worked directly with Iraqi Army Signal Soldiers as advisors. The mission of the first Iraqi Signal School was to train and prepare Iraqi „Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and support to Iraqi Battalions, Brigades, and Division headquarters, TF Adler NCOs and Officers from the 29th, 440th, and 32nd Signal Battalions taught courses on basic computer skills, hand held radios, repeaters and retransmitters, as well as other hardware and software classes. From December 28th 2006 when the first class of Iraqi Signal Soldiers graduated through the end of 22D Signal Brigade's tour of duty, over 600 Iraqis completed the training program and graduated. Iraqi Soldiers from each of the ten Iraqi divisions, the Iraqi Air force, Special Operations Forces, The Iraqi Navy, and personell from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Transportation all recived training at ISS>

The Signal Task force was involved in a number of mission critical security and force protection operations across the Iraqi theater in addition to the standard base cluster responsibilities levied on all tenant organizations. Elements of the 440th Signal Battalion provided the entire yearlong security force for arguably the highest profile dining facility in Iraq – the Sports Oasis Dining Facility on Victory Base. Elements of the 29th Signal Battalion provided the majority of the operational crew that manned the Joint Airborne Communications Center Command Post (JACC/CP) which was brought into theater to provide local security and force protection for the Victory Base complex. The enhanced security, force protection and situational awareness of all of these elements were critical to the overall success of the task force and Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

The Brigade also focused on finishing its portion of the Victory Base consolidated motor pool. This significantly increased the quality of life for the soldiers, especially the mechanics, who worked to provide critical service to the equipment in an austere environment. The HHC 22D Signal Brigade and 440th Signal Battalion were moved from separate lacations to one central location on the camp. The consolidated motor pool was equipped with a Large Area Maintnence



Shelter to place vehicles in a climate-controlled work area. It also was equipped with drainage pits for oil and water, inspection ramps, and a POL shed.
The Signal Task Force oper-

ated, maintained, and significantly improved the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Internet and Phone Café program that provided individual suites in support of combat forces across the entire

Combined Joint Operational Area (CJOA).
The Signal Task Force set the standard in the areas of customs and traditions of the military. The Signal Task force held NCO in-

ductions, NCO and Soldier of the quarter boards, Sergeant Morales induction ceremonies, combat patch ceremonies, monthly birthday bashes, and casing and uncasing ceremonies. The MNC-I CSM

and USSREUR CSM both were so impressed they sent a personal note and copy of some of these ceremonies to the sergeant Major of the Army.
I am proud to be your Command Sergeant Major.
Without question, Task force

Adler and the 22D Signal Brigade set the standard for multi-discipline, full spectrum Signal support to combatant commanders. They also set the standard as warriors!
My name is Clark and I'm a Soldier.



Ron Harris

Military Muscle

Moving monstrously heavy weights is not something that is easy to do, even when you have built yourself up to a level of strength far above that of the typical mortal man. We've all experienced days when we were punching out reps with something we normally couldn't budge, when we felt all-powerful like some sort of mighty beast. Yet we've all known other times when even our warm-up poundages felt like a ton, and home started looking like a nice place to go immediately.

The Key To Growing

Obviously, the key to growing is challenging your muscles to do something they've never done, up to that point. The most tried and true method of accomplishing this is by increasing the resistance. Bigger weights for 6-8 reps is the gospel for increasing muscle mass. But how can you lift heavy and feel strong all the time, without popping enough Anadrol 50 to have the local organ donor clinic sending you away politely? The key is in creating aggression.

Aggression by itself is not a good thing. People who are aggressive all the time tend to have high blood pressure and fatal heart attacks, not to mention being jerks who few people can tolerate. What we want in the gym is controlled aggression that can be turned on and off at the appropriate moments. Aggression is actually as much a physical state as mental, and it's a state that can help you heft some ridiculous iron.

If you've ever seen world-class powerlifters right before they stomp onto the platform for a thousand-pound squat or an 800-pound deadlift, you know what I mean. Coaches slap them, they snort ammonia capsules, and they basically work themselves into a frenzied rage before lifting what seems like impossible weights. You can bet your ass that their heart rate and adrenaline levels are through the roof. Here's how you can put this technique to work right now so you can start handling more weight today.

Use Stimulants

Probably you have something in your kitchen cabinet right now that's one of the cheapest, most effective stimulants on earth. No, not crystal meth, (unless you're a biker or trucker) good old coffee. If you don't already reap the significant benefits derived from these little brown beans, you're missing out. Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system effectively, and safely. It is by far the most frequently used "drug" on earth.

Caffeine almost instantly makes you more alert, energized, and increases your motor skills.

Side effects may include shakiness, loss of appetite, and trouble falling asleep if you train in the evening. These are a small price to pay for feeling powerful and intense within a few short minutes of imbibing.

Getting Into State

"Getting into state" is a phrase often used by success coach and infomercial tycoon Anthony Robbins. It describes a method of putting yourself into a mental and physical condition where you are at your absolute peak, ready to do or accomplish anything.

Many of you may already do something that puts you into a state of peak performance already, and not even realize it. You may put a certain song on your Discman every time you go for a maximum squat, closing your eyes and breathing deeply before you dip under the bar.

You may tap the bar a certain way, clap your hands, snap your fingers, or shout encouraging phrases like, "Come on!", "This ain't nothin'!" or "I got this, I got this." (Proper grammar has no place on the killing floor of the gym) For me and many others, getting into a state to lift the heaviest weights means whipping yourself into an aggressive state. To get an idea of what works best for you, think back to a time when you felt very strong.

Try to recall everything about it. How were you standing? How were you breathing? What did you



THE BEST FREINDS ANIMAL SHELTER HITS THE GYM: SGT Robert Wing, SPC Lucas Baldwin, PFC Matthew Higdon, SPC Tirrell Askew, SPC Andrew Kious and SPC Michael Howard demonstrate the meaning of suffering.



see? What did you hear? What were you thinking? Maybe you even remember a certain scent? The point is, deep down you already know how to put yourself into a state of peak performance to lift heavy weights. Now you need only to learn how to reproduce that state at will.

Channel Your Rage

Formless, undirected rage will work by itself, but its intensity can be greatly magnified if you can channel it toward someone or something specific. This shouldn't be too hard, as few of us are as forgiving as Jesus. Maybe you have an ex-wife who took your house and your favorite sofa, an ex-girlfriend who slept with all your friends, or an evil boss that made Adolf Hitler seem like an affable chap by comparison. People seem to work better as focal points than merely getting mad at the government (unless you live on a compound in Montana) or the latest Pauly Shore movie HBO is showing for the thirtieth time this month.

Music Can Calm Even The Most Savage Beast

Just as certain music can soothe and tranquilize you, there are some types that will make you feel energetic, powerful, and fearless. If you've ever seen the mosh pit at a metal show, or some of the melees that break out at rap concerts, you know that music can certainly

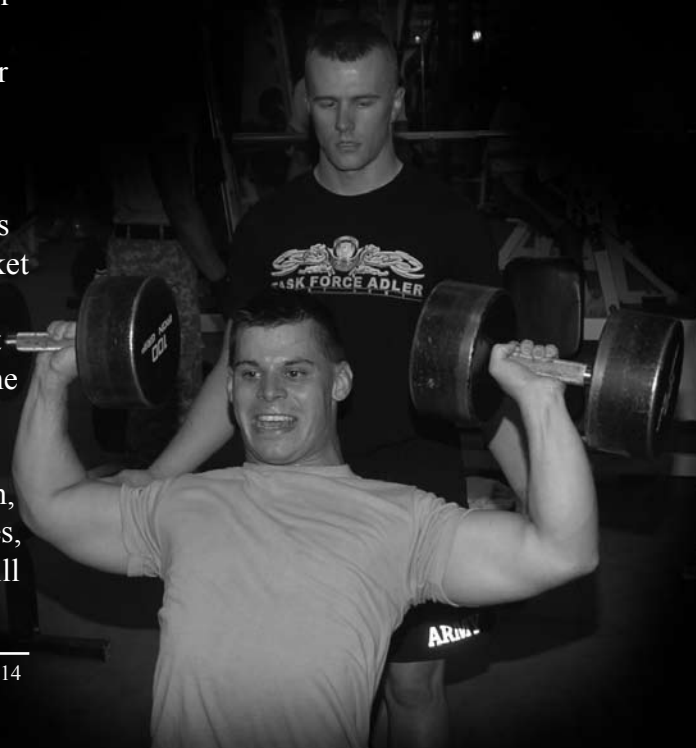
contribute to berserk and even violent behavior.

Walk into any gym or health club and this is what you will hear blasting through the sound system. I once worked at a health club where the owner insisted on playing only "oldies" music from the 50's and early 60's. Only the truly dedicated trainers were able to generate true intensity, while the others sleep-walked from machine to machine in a lackadaisical haze. Wearing headphones will assure that you can listen to exactly what you want, at whatever volume you want.

They also help you to shut out the outside world for a brief time and focus everything you have on your training and your body. Of course, listen to whatever gets you revved up.

Putting It All Together

It's the ideal situation. You're warmed up. Caffeine is pumping through your bloodstream like flaming rocket fuel. You're in a state of total alertness and rage. One, two, three, the reps keep coming as you stare at your face, a grimacing, reddening mask of rage, in the mirror. When the set is over and your legs throb and crumple beneath you, you will know that aggression isn't always a bad thing. Put to proper use in the gym, it will take you to new levels of size and strength. Yes, the meek may inherit the earth, but the aggressive will be there to lift it for them.





THE *of the* ADVENTURES WARFIGHTER

32ND SIGNAL BATTALION

OIF 05-07

32d Signal Battalion's yearlong deployment is coming to an end, and as Task Force Warhorn looks toward the future, they also reflect on the accomplishments of the past year by CPT Alison Hanger

While the end of a deployment is a time to look forward to reuniting with loved ones and returning to home station, it's also the time to reflect back on the great things that a unit has accomplished, and the 32nd Signal Battalion is no exception. This past year, the Warhorns have accomplished amazing feats in all areas of performance: Signal, EO,



Re-enlistment, humanitarian missions, and more. This article recaps just a few of their proudest accomplishments.

The ever-changing world of communications provided new missions for the tactical Signal battalion as we learned the word “commercialize.” Many of the Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE) shelters were placed in reserve as teams set forth to learn new skills in fiber optic installation. Delta Company led the way with this new commercialization mission working first on LSA Anaconda and then moving out to several Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) throughout northern Iraq. During May and June, a complete fiber ring was built around FOB Warhorse, allowing the 32nd

to bring back an entire tactical platoon to LSA Anaconda. Other FOBs received new radios and equipment that provided exciting learning opportunities as Soldiers trained to install these new devices. The outcome was the decrease in the tactical network and an eighteen-fold increase in productivity as the new equipment provided faster and more accurate service. The Warhorns also coordinate with the 72nd Signal Battalion from Mannheim, Germany, to augment and support the communications effort on LSA Anaconda.

The 32nd Signal Battalion continued to provide outstanding maintenance during their rotation. Falling in on substandard vehicles and learning to work with up-ar-

1LT Michael Smith, CPT John M. Aguilar, and SSG James T. Link of Bravo Company, 32nd Signal Battalion pose before a convoy.

Soldiers of 32nd Signal Battalion participate in a morale-raising tug-of-war

mored trucks, company motorpools worked diligently to get the battalion up to speed on the latest changes. With security and force protection ever in the forefront, new communications systems in the vehicles were installed to increase command and control during convoys. The electronic maintenance shop receive accolades from higher



32ND SIGNAL BATTALION

and other units on the created of a Night Vision Device repair shop – the only one in the 22nd Signal Brigade. Units from all around the LSA showed up at the doors of ELM to receive assistance with their NVDs.

If the success of a unit can be seen in the numbers of Soldiers who choose to re-enlist, then the 32nd had an extremely successful year. During the deployment, the 32nd Signal Battalion distributed over \$900,000 in bonus money. This reached 100% of all re-enlistment goals. In a continued effort to encourage Soldiers to stay with the 32nd until inactivation, Soldier had the opportunity to take advantage of a college incentive, where they can attend college full time if they re-enlist to stay until next summer.

The Warhorn Battalion also took charge of some different types of missions throughout the year. The chance to complete a humanitarian mission arose in May and June, and the 32nd took advantage of it. Hundreds of boxes of Girl Scout cookies were sent to the Battalion, and the Warhorns passed them on to a local school in the Iraqi countryside. Along with the cookies, Soldiers delivered shoes, socks, and toys. Not only was this fun for Soldiers to do, it also improved relations between the US Army and the local Iraqi community, as several Soldiers were invited to tea with some of the local Iraqi village leaders.

LSA Anaconda also assigned the 32nd Signal Battalion to be in charge of the Asian Pacific Heritage month celebration, and it proved to be a wise assignment. Members of the Warhorn Equal Opportunity team banded together to create an outstanding program that included food, music, and an amazing dance show by members of the LSA community who hail from the Asian and Pacific Islands. Every attendee left with a great understanding of the various cultures and each island was set apart from the others.

These accomplishments were only a few of the many that the 32d Signal Battalion achieved during their year deployment. This is the final deployment for the Warhorns, who face inactivation next year, and, like always, they performed above the standard and were the battalion to emulate.





COMBAT TESTED: COMBAT PROVEN

Forged in combat during their yearlong deployment, the 136th Signal Battalion has led the way in promotions and reenlistments by CSM Elizabeth Shockley



As we near the last days of this deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom IV, I proudly take another dose of the positive energy within our NCO Corps across Task Force Southern Lightning. Our Warriors have served with honor and distinction to help the Iraqi citizens get started on their promising future. Long after our forces have left this theater, Iraqis from all walks of life will remember the American Soldiers and their contributions to their nation. This is truly something we all should be proud of.

We have also made other significant strides within our units. Senior NCOs have mentored and

trained their junior NCOs and Soldiers to maintain their arms, equipment and themselves to the Army standard. In this process, sixty-seven promotions in the ranks of Sergeant through First Sergeant have been completed. Another twenty promotions will occur before we leave Iraq. It is because of our leaders at all levels that this was even possible. For example, Task Force Southern Lightning 25F Specialists occupied the top nine out of ten slots on their Texas Army National Guard promotion list. They further dominated the list, taking fifteen out of the top 20!! Our 25Q Specialists did just as well, dominating their promo-

REENLISTMENTS

SPC Olive of the 136th Signal Battalion takes the oath of enlistment. Task Force Southern Lightning gave out almost \$1.5 million in reenlistment bonuses

tion list with sixteen out of the top 20!! The 52C Specialists fared well with two of our Warriors making the top 10!! Of course, the other motor pool Warriors did their share of earning bragging rights by taking six of their top 20 63B slots on that promotion list. The rest of the Specialists must have heard there would be fierce competition



PROMOTIONS

During this deployment, sixty-seven promotions in the ranks of Sergeant through First Sergeant have been completed.

for these bragging rights when the 92G Specialists did their part by taking two of the top 10! Because of the efforts of these Soldiers as well as their leaders, they were able to get promotion points properly awarded. This took attention to detail and persistence to get Soldiers' records updated for training completed, education, physical fitness test scores, weapons qualification data, and promotion board scores. All of this preparation was completed prior to December 31, 2005.

Our efforts did not stop with our Specialists, as our Sergeants did just as well in their

respective promotion lists. In fact, the 25F20 Warriors dominated their list taking fifteen of the top 20 slots (including numbers 1-7)!!! Our 25Q20 Sergeants occupied eight out of the top 10 slots!!! The 63B20 NCOs took two of their top 25 slots as well! Our Senior NCOs closing the ranks and mentoring these first line leaders were a major factor contributing to twenty-two of these Sergeants being promoted to Staff Sergeant. They also made sure that the Staff Sergeants standing in our formations prior to deployment were squared away, too. The promotion opportunities are harder to come by when considering the ranks of Sergeant First Class and above. Yet we as a Task Force saw ten NCOs get promoted to Sergeant First Class. That is awesome!!!

Now, if that doesn't motivate and excite you, perhaps you haven't heard the good news com-

ing out of Delta Company, 111th Signal. Our South Carolina Task Force Warriors had many promotions as well. Twenty out of 118 personnel were promoted to the ranks of Sergeant, Staff Sergeant and Sergeant First Class. Without the efforts of each and every leader, this would not have been possible. Senior NCOs once again were doing their part to mentor and develop their teams to their maximum potential.

In addition to the eighty-seven promotions I just pointed out, there were many Soldiers who reenlisted during this deployment as well. As a result of higher morale, record bonus opportunities and promotions, Task Force Southern Lightning Soldiers chose to reenlist. These reenlistments equate to almost \$1.5 million worth of bonuses.

These are some of the accomplishments that stand out to me as we near the end of our mission. The most important accomplishment, however, is yet to be achieved --- getting every Soldier home safely to their families! All of us need to continue hitting that reset button daily so that we can scan our sectors for SAFETY with a fresh set of eyes. We need to look to our left and right so that our buddies are SAFE, too. Leaders need to not only take care of their Soldiers, but themselves as well. Keep hydrated, use your personal protective equipment and drive safely so that we can accomplish the mission and make it back to home station. Hooah!!!

The big one that **didn't** get away

by 1LT Pete Mousseau



HHC BRIGADE

Fish on!” hoots an excited Lieutenant as a truck sized carp comes out of the water to attack the floating, bread-laden fishing lure. Standing on the bank of one of the many lakes interspersed throughout the grounds of Saddam’s former palace system, 1LT Pete Mousseau and his fishing compatriot, MAJ Michael Naifeh watch intently as their plan begins to come together.

“The plan is as follows: catch a big carp on a Rapala lure, snap a picture in front of the Al Faw Palace, and send it in to win Florida Fishing Weekly’s Rapala photo contest,” states MAJ Naifeh, with a rather large grin.

With what seemed to be a rather large fish on the line, in the perfect location, the Task Force S1, Operation Team Fish looked as if it might just work out. But as any fisherman will tell you, you can’t count on anything until the fish is in the boat, or on the bank, in the case of Iraqi fishing tactics techniques and procedures. Palace going passers by stopped to stare, the fish darted downward into the weeds, the pole bent at an impossible angle... but with careful angling and some outstanding teamwork, the S1 team did prevail. Now for the climax of all catch and release anglers: the evidence- a well placed snapshot. Click... and it’s a winner!

According to MAJ Naifeh “the team fish concept came about when the lake back behind the CNOSC started to get over fished. What started as a low key way to unwind really caught on. Then, 1LT Mous-

seau and I had to find another spot to catch some larger fish.” Some Soldiers amassed expansive movie collections, some Soldiers learned the guitar or a new language, some picked up Salsa danc-

ing or “kicked it” friends, but a few battle hardened Soldiers in HHC, 22D Signal Brigade passed away their downtime fishing. Soldiering 24/7 for 365 days can take its toll, but outstanding Soldiers like

SPC Pancake, SPC Thomas, SGT Wilmes, CH (LTC) Behnken, SFC Shinn, and SSG Centamore found solace from the breakneck pace by “getting a line in the water.” Sometimes this group of anglers

would just hit the back patio of the Coalition Network Operations and Security Center (CNOSC), or head out to Lost Lake around sunset after a hard day in the Motorpool; but on a few occasions a larger fishing

excursion would develop and come to fruition. One of these larger excursions involved 2 HMMVs, ten poles, all the tackle one could think of, and a most of the abovementioned



Operation Team Fish poses for a group photo



HHC BRIGADE

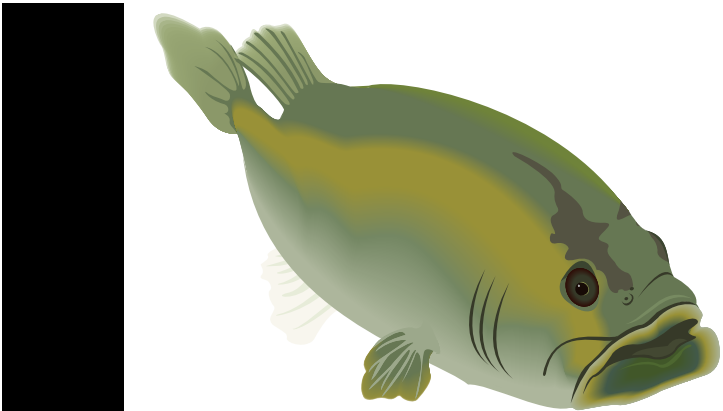
Soldiers. These unyielding anglers gathered at 0700 hours at the chow hall to grab some food for themselves and something extra for their aquatic quarry. Fishing around a bombed out palace for the better part of the morning, the group stumbled upon what’s commonly termed, “a right nice, fishin’ hole!” “When you go fishing, go for the big ones, or don’t fish at all,” says SGT Jason Wilmes, 22D Signal Light Wheel Mechanic. And that’s what this crew of fishermen did. MAJ Naifeh pulled in a primordial monster with quarter-sized scales. SFC Shinn landed a carp weighing in at 22 lbs. The Chaplain got in to the mix as well, catching a beauty. All in all, the day was a tremendous success. Outside the success of landing a decent sized fish, are the side benefits of taking it easy by the shore, sharing fishing tales with fellow Soldiers, and building relationships with Iraqis and Third Country Nationals (TCN) around the FOB. According to SSG Centamore, “The best part of fishing around Camp Victory was forging relationships with the locals. When we would give a fish caught by Al Faw to an Iraqi Soldier, he would

consider it an honor. Not just because we gave them a fish, which they thought was great, but because

that the fish came from the waters around Saddam’s former palace.” Task Force Adler Soldiers added to the fishing stories, and expanded the lore with tales of the great Mangar who fought for hours on lost lake, stories of 3 foot Shabuti Carp lurking in the waters around Camp Slayer, and the infamous cat-fish eel swarms that could de-bone a chicken wing in less than three minutes. “These MPs told one time that a carp out on Lost Lake would eat birds,” says SGT Wilmes. “The pigeons out there were dying because of some pest control, and falling in the water. The MPs said they saw a carp that had to weigh at least 140 lbs, eat one of the pigeons.” While sharing fishing stories anglers, novice or experienced, can come away with a new approach to bringing in the “Big Boys.” When asked what lures are best for bringing the biggest carp to shore, MAJ Naifeh asserts that: “The Squiggly Wiggly and the Lickety Split are the only lures I use!” All things considered, the Soldiers and Fishermen of HHC, 22D Signal Brigade could be said to have added something to the body of fishing knowledge around the FOB, and forged some great friendships along the way...



1LT Peter Mousseau proudly displays his fish



FISH TALES: SFC Scott Shinn landed a carp weighing in at 22 lbs, while MAJ Mike Naifeh pulled in a primordial monster with quarter-sized scales.

FITNESS

If you build it, they will come

By 1SG Nedlic

The aerobics room on FOB Diamondback was built, but missing was the sound of music and people dancing around and jumping to the beat. The builder must have known, however, that the Headhunters were coming into town. In November 2005, the Soldiers of HHC, 29th Signal Battalion arrived on the FOB and immediately began looking for ways to improve their areas and the quality of life for themselves and others on the FOB.

These Headhunters made improvements around their living areas, work areas, and other areas on the FOB. One of the more notable improvements that these Headhunters made was improving morale through aerobics. Three lady Headhunters got together and developed a plan to use the aerobics room to offer aerobics for everyone on the FOB.

With their plan carefully worked out SGT Chiapetta, SGT McGee, and SGT Olmstead spoke to the MWR program director, Ms. Silvia Labine. Fascinated with the idea, Ms. Labine immediately approved it and said, “The Soldiers would love it.”

They put their plan into motion and for four days a week from 1800 to 1900 hours, these



three outstanding NCOs would bring their own music and dedicate themselves for about an hour to helping Soldiers and civilians get into shape. SGT Chiapetta taught step aerobics on Mondays and Thursdays, while SGT Olmstead and SGT McGee led high impact aerobics on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Although turnout was low in the beginning, the number of participants began to grow as the word got out. Word spread quickly and by January, after the holiday period was over, and New Year resolutions were made, the little aerobics room began to fill up.

“After about a month, our number soared up to 65,” said SGT Olmstead. On a number of occasions, they had to move the class to the gym auditorium because the room was becoming very crowded.

Participants and regular enthusiasts came from both sides of the spectrum: the old and the young; the experienced and the not-so-experienced; Privates and Colonels; and the healthy and not-so-healthy. Despite the vast differences among the participants, they all shared a common goal: to get in better shape and have fun doing it.

SSG Bolwaire of HHC, 29th Signal Battalion said, “I think people keep coming back for the torture because not only is it fun, but it’s a great workout and it pushes them to their limit.”

The step aerobics on Mondays and Thursdays provided an excellent workout for the legs

and the respiratory system. SGT Chiapetta kept everyone captivated with her latest hip-hop numbers and graceful moves from step to step. Her exuberance and high energy level made it easy for her to command instructions over the music. She led the workout on her days and, like many of her students, showed up the following day for the high impact segments.

SGT McGee and SGT Olmstead collectively led the high impact aerobics on Tuesdays and Fridays. This dynamic duo, which became known to many on the FOB as Ebony and Ivory, were second to none in health and fitness. They were in the best shape of their lives and helping others to get where they were became one of their goals. Their approach to teaching aerobics was both exciting and challenging for everyone.

CW2 Angel Diaz, a devoted fan of aerobics said, “This is a very challenging class and it makes you think about the kind of shape you are really in.”

“Our class was designed to work every muscle group and to burn as many calories as we can” said SGT McGee. Many who participated on a regular basis lost a lot of excess weight and improved their general health.

MSG Kenneth Hellmer, a 23 year

veteran of the US Air Force, lost 27 pounds. He said, “In my 23 years of service as an Airman, this was one of the most enjoyable times I’ve had.” His wife, Kim, wrote a letter to the dynamic duo thanking them for helping him loose weight. Inspired by her

“This is a very challenging class it makes you think about the shape you are really in”



husband’s weight loss, Kim said she and their children have a goal to loose 50 pounds before Kenneth returns home.

The 47th Combat Support Hospital was one of the many units on the FOB that benefited from this aerobics program. MAJ Willie Lattimore said that many Soldiers joined the program to lose weight and to get rock hard abs. He further indicated that, “most of the Soldiers are having so much fun that they are unaware of the third

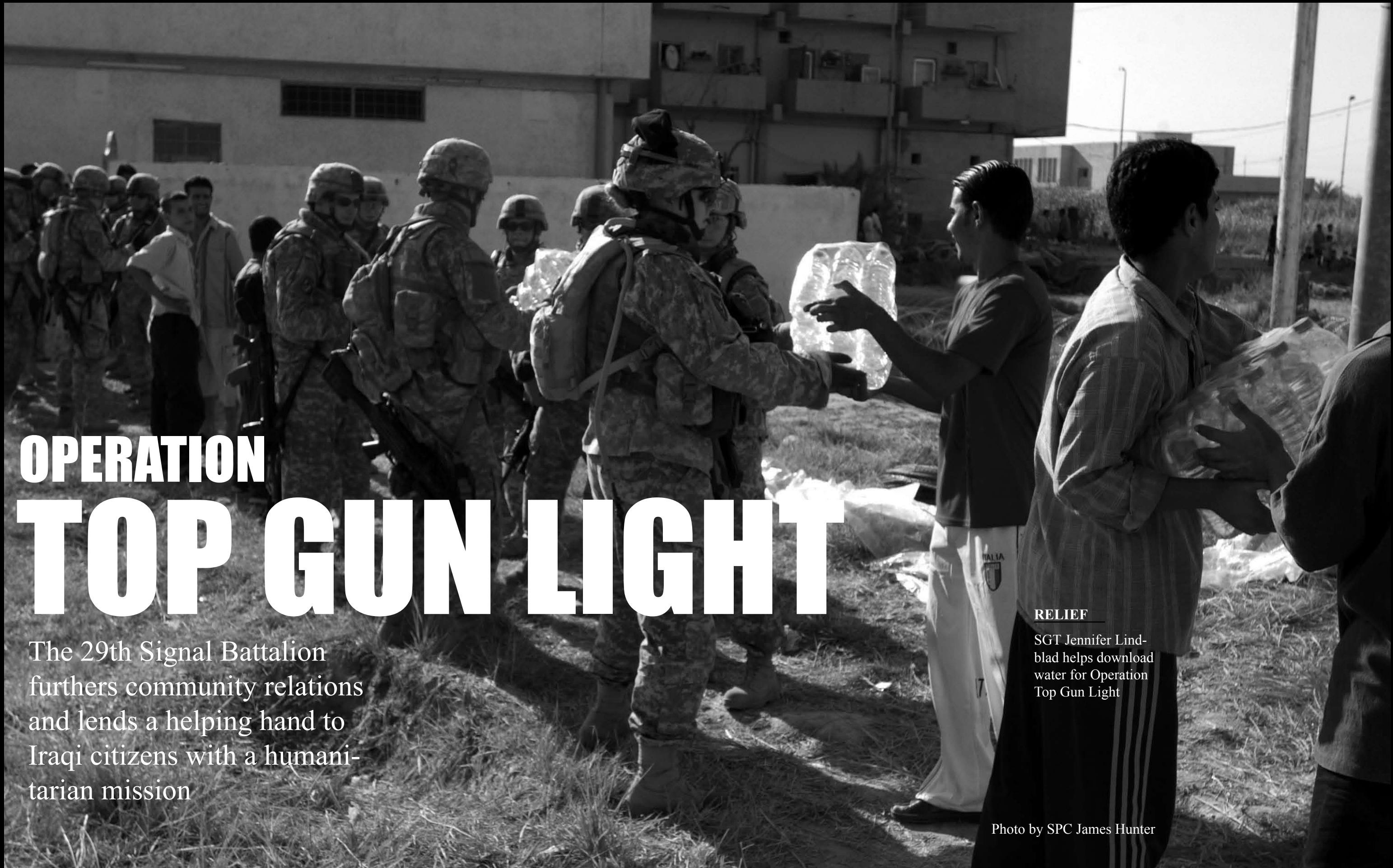
INITIATIVE

SGT McGee and SGT Olmstead collectively led the high impact aerobics on Tuesdays and Fridays.

order of effect, which is preparation for the Army Physical Fitness Test.” After participating for about six months, MAJ Lattimore took the PT test and scored 363 points. He said, “I have never scored this

high in my 22 years of service.”

What these three ladies did for the FOB was huge by any measure! They were a humble group of dedicated professionals who, through selfless service, touched the lives of many through aerobics. They kept the aerobics room full for a while, but soon they must move on. But no matter where they go, if you build it, they will come.



OPERATION TOP GUN LIGHT

The 29th Signal Battalion furthers community relations and lends a helping hand to Iraqi citizens with a humanitarian mission

RELIEF

SGT Jennifer Lindblad helps download water for Operation Top Gun Light

Photo by SPC James Hunter

In the humid, pre-dawn darkness two C Company, 29th Signal Battalion Soldiers conducted pre-combat checks with sixty other combat arms Soldiers preparing to embark on a dangerous humanitarian assistance mission. The mission, dubbed Operation Top Gun Light, was aimed at providing food, water, and much needed medical services to an Iraqi village located near the Baghdad International Airport. The mission's only two female Soldiers, Sergeant First Class Shawn Breyette and Sergeant Jennifer Lindblad, volunteered to perform critical personnel searches and force protection duties inherent to the operation. As the Iraqi village held literally hundreds of female Iraqi civilians, the ability to effectively and respectfully search them became crucial to the mission's success.

The two 2d Platoon, C Company female Soldiers came to be associated with Operation Top Gun Light in an unusual manner. After completing a series of signal missions in support of Forward Operating Base Courage and Marez Air Base in Mosul, C Company, 29th Signal Battalion was re-missioned. They were assigned to the 1-320 Field Artillery Brigade and further given the task to assume the force protection mission of guarding the Multi-National Corps – Iraq (MNC-I) Headquarters at Camp Victory, Baghdad. During their first two weeks, C Company's 2d Platoon integrated themselves into the operations of Headquarters Battery, 1-320 Field Artillery Brigade and took over security duties at MNC-I's Al Faw Palace. The 2d Platoon Soldiers adapted to their new role easily; and soon were well

SFC Shawn Breyette searches an Iraqi woman before entering secured area.

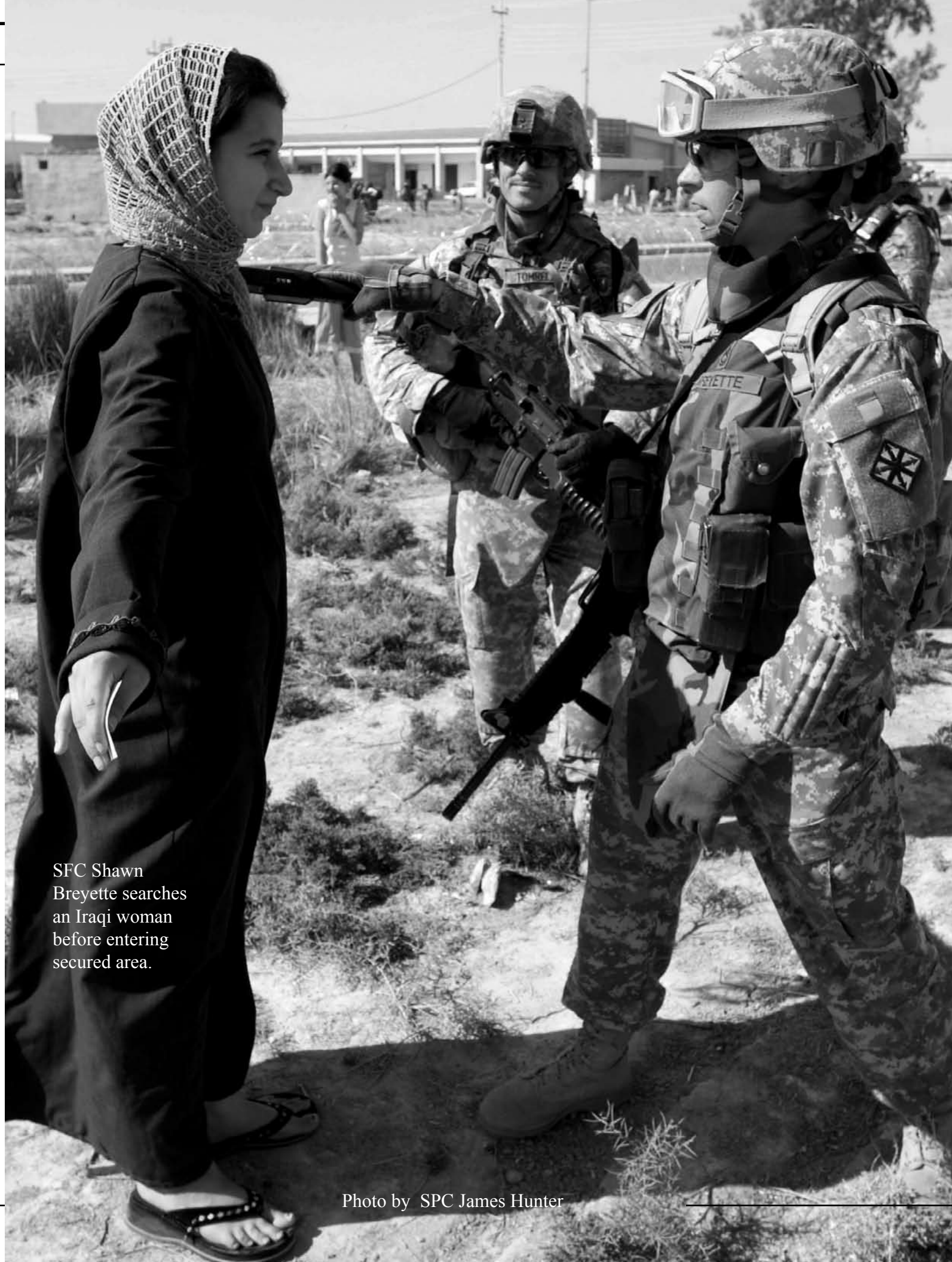


Photo by SPC James Hunter

29TH SIGNAL BATTALION

respected by MNC-I Headquarters personnel.

Meanwhile, the residents of the Iraqi village continued to endure the usual host of problems over the course of the summer – lack of electricity, improper sewage treatment facilities, little food, and no medical care. The village residents' already dismal situation grew worse as not only local authorities but also Anti-Iraqi Forces pressured the residents to abandon the village to suit their own ends. The village provides a substantial work force to the numerous Coalition Force operating bases in the Baghdad area so Coalition Force leaders conceived of Operation Top Gun Light as a measure to prevent Anti-Iraqi Force infiltration, establish a safer environment for the residents, and provide critical humanitarian aid and medical service. In addition, the village serves as a buffer between the Victory Base Complex and the sectarian violence plagued section of Baghdad known as Al Maria.

Tasked with the mission to establish a secure perimeter for the search area and the aid distribution point, Headquarters Battery, 1-320 Field Artillery Brigade soon realized their requirement to search the Iraqis seeking aid would be further complicated by the presence of numerous Iraqi female civilians. With little time before mission execution, the Headquarters Battery, already impressed by the unit's competence and energy, sought female volunteers from 2d Platoon, C Company, 29th Signal Battalion. Sergeant First Class Breyette, the Platoon Sergeant, and Sergeant Lindblad eagerly accepted

this very short notice mission and immediately began preparations for the mission. No strangers to the planning and execution of tactical operations and combat patrols, the 2d Platoon Sergeants quickly assimilated themselves into the Headquarters Battery Task Force; learned and rehearsed their part of the mission; and readied their individual equipment.

On the day of Operation Top Gun Light, Task Force Soldiers streamed into the village. With a practiced ease, they cleared and secured key buildings and road intersections in order to establish security and overwatch positions in support of the primary search area and aid distribution point. Following closely behind them, members of Headquarters Battery arrived in the perimeter and set up the maze of concertina wire and obstacles that protected the residents during the personnel search and as they received aid. Sergeant First Class Breyette and Sergeant Lindblad, initially crew members on an up armored HMMWV armed with an M240 machine gun, made their way to the search area and aid distribution point to join the Soldiers downloading enough pallets of food, water, and medical supplies to support the expected 600 families seeking aid. The presence of US forces immediately drew in a large crowd of Iraqis anxious to receive food and medical attention. The US Soldiers were well received, and the main effort of the operation began. Manning the female search point, the 2d Platoon Sergeants diligently and patiently processed hundreds of Iraqi women and children into the distribution area. The Iraqis, excited and hun-

gry, praised the US Soldiers.

“The people of Iraq, when they see American Soldiers, feel safe. They are here to help us... (They) are here for our freedom,” relayed Mustafa, a 17 year old interpreter speaking for a knot of Iraqi families.

Lt. Col Rafael Torres, commander of the 1-320 Field Artillery Brigade, held that the mission was critical to the security of the Victory Base Complex, stating, “I think what we have done is established the...trust of the local nationals... maintaining a relationship and cooperation with (the locals) is critical for...securing Victory Base Complex.”

The end of the day tally indicated 520 families received rations, medical supplies, and medical aid. The weary Soldiers, while still maintaining an alert security posture, bundled concertina and took down the obstacles that provided structure and order to the conduct of the operation. After the convoy brief prior to the Task Force departure, SFC Breyette sat exhausted in her Up-armored HMMWV.

“Oh my aching back! Damn, it’s hot,” she laughed. “I’m complaining now, but what I’m really thinking about was the difference we made for the 520 families in the village, the looks on their faces, how happy and grateful they were. I felt a great sense of accomplishment and pride to be part of this mission. I was proud to see the results of our efforts and actions instantaneously, something us signal Soldiers rarely see.”



AR YE VA R I W N

Giving

FOR

AWARD

A Voice

Task Force Runner spent a year in Iraq, enabling communications and network operations for Soldiers deployed throughout the theater. This, however, is far from the only thing they accomplished. A rundown of the accomplishments of Task Force Runner

All Illustrations by Spc. Lucas Baldwin

As our combat tour comes to an end, the Road Runners look forward to returning to our homes. During our deployment members of Task Force Runner served as far north as Irbil, west to Ar Ramadi, and southeast to Bucca. At the peak of our deployment, Task Force Runner was deployed to 26 separate FOBs (Forward Operating Base), COBs (Contingency Operating Base), and other bases throughout Iraq. Despite the distance separating our Battalion HQ at Victory Base Complex from these outsites, Soldiers working in these areas exceeded the standard on a daily basis. Their outstanding service led to an astonishing 30% of our

Soldiers receiving a promotion this year. In total, 175 Soldiers advanced through the ranks as they were promoted to the

next level (see chart below). Our Soldiers were also recognized for their hard work earning bags of commander’s coins for excellence and over 800 awards (see chart below). Handling all these actions was no small feat for our S1 shop. They accomplished their mission and received several accolades



from members within Multi-national Corps – Iraq. Beginning in August and continuing into September, LTC Orndorff and CSM Willis traveled to nearly every site to personally present end of tour awards to our Soldiers.

Stay Army

Soldiers from the task force re-enlisted in staggering numbers and confirmed their commitment to continue service in our Army. These soldiers were given the option to choose their next duty station, change their MOS, or receive

a monetary bonus (ranging from \$500 to \$37,000). We exceeded our retention goals with over 230 total re-enlistments. More than 120 first-timers re-enlisted. The task force exceeded goals in every category, and bonuses totaled over \$3.3 million. Our reenlistments totaled 1,353 years of additional service. Way to go, Retention!

Chaplain – Here to Serve

An important aspect of any deployment is maintaining your spiritual fitness. No team knows that mission better than our Unit Ministry

Team (UMT). Busy with conducting several Prayer Breakfasts, Soldier support, and counseling sessions, our Chaplain still found the time to conduct baptisms for seven individuals. The UMT coordinated Operation Storyteller, video taping Soldiers on DVD while reading a book so that their children could hear mom or dad read them a bed time story from thousands of miles away. Additionally, dual military couples renewed their marriage vows on the balcony of the palace. Soldiers from 16th ENG BDE, 22D SIG BDE, 49th MP BDE, 205th MI BDE, and 302D MI BN participat-

ed in the vow renewal ceremony.

Army Intelligence – Not an Oxymoron

The task force S2 shop worked diligently all year as the spearhead of our intelligence operations. CPT Cendana and SPC (P) Abido conducted 33 threat briefings and 7 country clearances for personnel going to exotic places on R&R. They also completed over 30 security clearance upgrades and updates for task force personnel. In addition to their other duties, this team supported our theater convoy operations with threat analyses for some 250 convoys. Their calculated analysis of the current threats, trends, and routes reduced the risks our convoys faced while they operated in theater. Fortunately, their efforts resulted in zero casualties, minimal escalation of force, and only one improvised explosive devise encounter.

EWO – Army & Navy Working Hand in Hand

We don’t hold the fact that our Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO) is a Naval Academy graduate against him. LTJG Duenas was a welcome addition to our task force with his extensive knowledge of CREW systems. Our EWO hit the ground running upon his Camp Victory arrival, and traveled with our HHC convoy team to further validate their TTPs. He also ensured that members of the task force received the proper training by conducting hands-on training with improvised explosive devise (IED) detonator simulations. He ensured the convoy security teams were prepared for their missions,

utilizing counter IED techniques properly. Ironically, the one IED attack that our convoy teams encountered throughout our tenure occurred on LTJG Duenas' first convoy!

Network Operations – Bring It On

Task Force Runner conquered all obstacles head on since hitting the ground in October 2005. We began by merging three battalions (440th Signal Battalion from Darmstadt, Germany; C and

D Companies of 40th Signal Battalion from Fort Huachuca, Arizona; and C Company 32D Signal Battalion from Darmstadt, Germany), to become a task force of seven companies. As a task force, we conducted the smooth Relief In Place (RIP) of 327th Signal Battalion and 51st Signal Battalions (and allowed the 51st to redeploy 3 months before Boots On Ground (BOG)). Later on in our deployment, we took control of Technical Control Facility (TCF) missions from 72d Signal Battalion and 54th Signal Battalion.

The task force drove the train on commercialization and greatly impacted our ability to reduce the Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE) footprint, reducing manning requirements while simultaneously increasing services to the customer. Those manpower savings ultimately allowed the task force to assume added

missions, such as the TCFs, as well as various other missions throughout the AOR. We were able to celebrate the end of mission (EOM) of 4 node centers located at Camps Victory, Duke, Echo, and Taqaddum. The EOM of the node center at Taqaddum allowed us to relocate our assets to support missions in Camp Ramadi. Not only did we remove node centers from system, but we also eliminated 16 Small Extension Nodes (SEN) (at remote sites), within

FORGED IN COMBAT CSM Thomas J. Clark Awards the purple heart to Spc. Wood. Task Force Runner earned 7 purple hearts in total



QUICK REACTION FORCE: Task Force Runner's QRF team was the envy of Victory Base

our network. Four of these SENs were replaced through RIPs and upgrades. Our culminating achievement was the EOM of all TROPO missions in theater. MSE-Commercial Off the Shelf (COTS) and Long Range Ex-

tension (LRE) Hybrid Data Package Solutions directly influenced our accomplishments. In the end, our spectrum of communications spanned from MSE to Joint Network Node (JNN), data packages to USC-60s and TCFs, TROPO, and TACSAT. These innovative solutions will continue to be used for many years to come.

Electronic Maintenance

When they weren't busy with deep cleans and repairing equipment, ELM was actively installing new systems into our convoy security team vehicles. The VIS-3 Intercom systems were in short supply, but of our convoy security teams had an urgent need for inter-team communications. ELM conducted deliberate research into solutions, engineered a system, and submitted for award funding. After receiving these funds, ELM installed the much needed SETCOMs into 14 vehicles. These SETCOMs allowed the convoy security team to com-

municate with each other while out on the road, and it saved the Army thousands of dollars.

Training – Keep Up the Standards

Not only did Task Force Runner 'maintain contact,' but we also maintained our qualifications while deployed. Our companies collectively conducted 26 ranges, 100% Common Task Training (CTT), and 60 CLS certifications. We also trained personnel in equal opportu-

fiber training. The majority of the communications courses were taught by the Baghdad Signal University instructors. These courses and on the job training aided over 250 Soldiers working outside their MOS in completing our mission.

How Can We Assist You?

C/440th was a company comprised of soldiers familiar with connecting physical devices over long distances and maintaining constant service throughout our AOR.

155 kilometers of copper were in installed during this deployment. Some of the units and areas they assisted during the year include: 4th ID, Titan Civilians, units on Camp Stryker, units on Area 4, MNSTC-I, Australian Forces, British Forces, Air Force, MPs, Training Area 14, C-9 Logistics, Psyops, CID, Task Force Troy, JCCS-1, 18th and 393d CSD (Seitz), 84th ENG (BIAP), Camp Liberty ENG, BDOC (security cameras at the ECPs), and the Contracting Office. Through a concerted effort to do so, C/440th completed upgrades on 24 buildings (47 including annexes), allowing for their transfer to the 72nd Signal Battalion (base support plan). All in all, the skills these Soldiers learned and honed during this deployment is highly lucrative in the civilian world.

Unit Movement

Ground movement in Iraq rested on the shoulders of our highly trained Convoy Security Teams. These



nity, unit victim advocacy, retention, PBUSE, unit movement, and field sanitation. Our communications related courses included Basic Networking, Advanced Networking, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Call Manager, Promina, JNN, Firebird, REDCOM, and

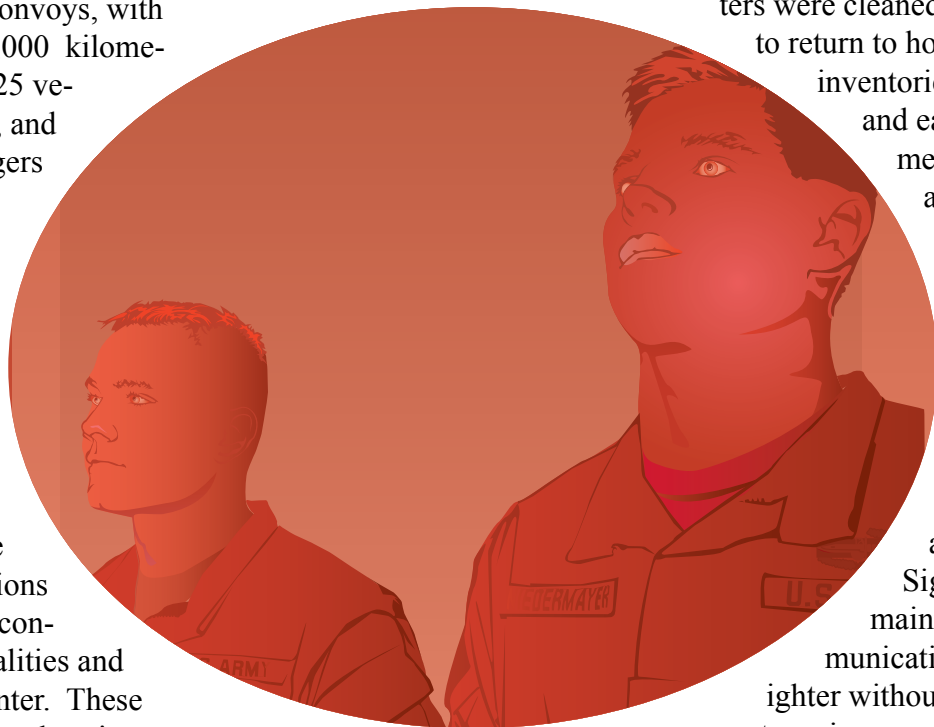
These Soldiers received training on newer strategic systems and equipment, such as Fiber installs and Fluke and Firebird testing equipment. They hit the ground running with their new found knowledge working throughout Baghdad. Over 100 kilometers of fiber and



teams were composed of communicators, mechanics, and electronic maintenance personnel that volunteered to serve outside their MOS. Task Force Runner conducted over 250 convoys, with more than 55,000 kilometers driven, 925 vehicles moved, and 3,060 passengers taken to their destinations. The convoy teams also provided necessary training to 29th, 136th, and 86th Signal Battalions while they were in Kuwait. All missions were professionally conducted with zero fatalities and only one IED encounter. These Soldiers carried themselves in a manner that cannot be expressed with words. Their daily dedication and devotion to their mission earned our Task Force special praise and recognition.

In addition to convoy operations, we also used TMRs and JMRs to move our equipment. Our unit movement team deployed over 500 pieces of rolling stock and containers to final destinations in Iraq to meet RIP/TOA timelines. 15 air movements and 75 TMRs allowed over 600 pieces of equipment to move intra-theater. In addition, our UMOs also managed air movement for more than 1,370 flights supporting over 3,000 personnel movements.

Monetary funds gave our unit the ability to improve services and helped to make our mission a little easier. We had the purchasing power of \$4.2 million allocated through FOO, GPC, PR&C, MIPR,



GSA, and the SSA. In support of our inactivation, our supply team was able to turn in 18 shelters that were of no further use.

Our Task Force motor maintenance team shined by completing 100% of all vehicles services through April 2007. They also sustained a 96% readiness rate and completed 841 work orders. Another high priority included turn-ins as the team saved \$662 million by turning in 1,054 lines of equip-

ment.

Task Force Runner redeployment operations were jump started with the deep clean program. 88 MSE and 18 TROPO and TACSAT shelters were cleaned in our preparation to return to home station. 100% inventories were conducted and early return equipment was identified and prepped for return. Several MSE shelters were identified for stay-behind including 2 V3s and 6 V1s. The stay-behind equipment will allow for the 86th Signal Battalion to maintain superior communications to the warfighter without having to replace systems in operation.

After a year of performing day in and day out, members of Task Force Runner are headed for a well deserved block leave period. Soldiers and families of the Task Force should be proud of the work they have done and the missions that were accomplished.

Though 440th is facing deactivation, We will return to Germany with heads held high knowing that the 86th Signal Battalion will continue the mission in Iraq.



SAVING PLANE TRIPS: Task Force Runner played a major role in reducing the Signal footprint in theater by over one-third.





AR YE EV AI RE I WN

29th Signal Teams up with **TASK FORCE ADLER**

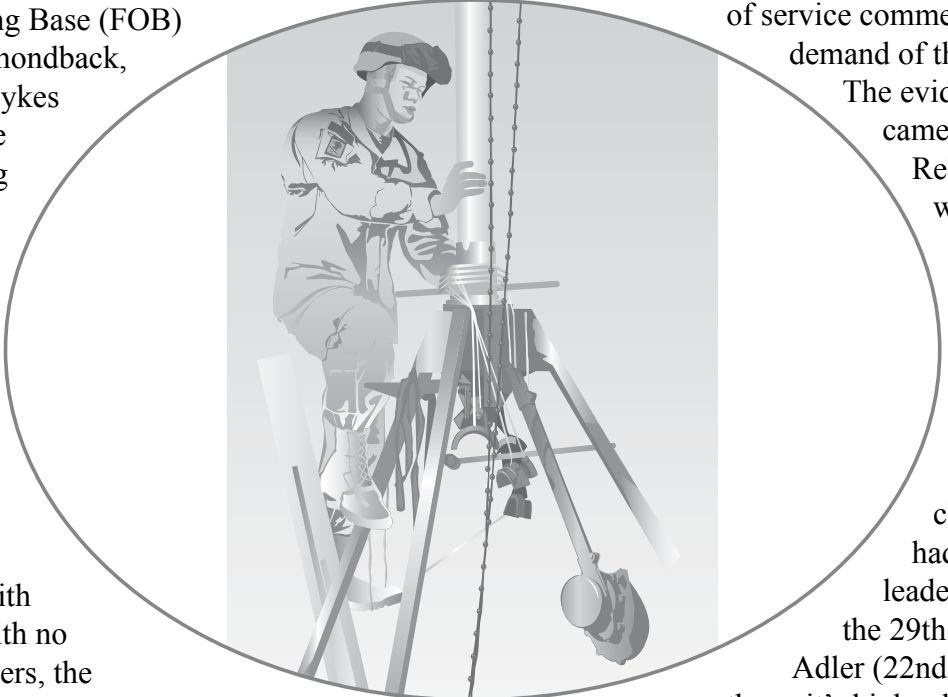
How an underequipped and over-stretched 29th Signal teamed up with Task Force Adler to excel by **CPT Rob Harrison**

Eirca early December 2005, over 600 Soldiers of the 29th Signal Battalion hit ground in the Northwest Region of Iraq for OIF 05-07. After only 10 months dwell-time, the 29th was back in Iraq following a one year rotation in OIF II where they maintained and improved Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE) tactical communications systems. In contrast to their previous experience, the stated mission of the 29th became to commercialize the greater Mosul Area.

The ensuing months would take meticulous planning, precise coordination, and a “Team of Teams,” to accomplish a task foreign to traditional tactical signal battalions. The 29th Signal Battalion Task Force comprised of a specially organized version of the five Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) companies plus the US Army Reserve 842nd Signal Company for long-range transmissions capability. The 29th settled

at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Courage, FOB Diamondback, FOB Marez, FOB Sykes and FOB Endurance (Q’West) supporting the Multinational Brigade – North-west (MNB-NW) battlespace headed by Task Force Freedom (TFF) at FOB Courage. Shortly after the arrival of the 29th, TFF was postured for redeployment with no replacement. With no incoming headquarters, the MNB-NW battlespace would be assimilated by Multinational Division North (MND-N) under the direction of 101st Air Assault Division (TF Band of Brothers or simply TF BoB) from Continuous Operating Base (COB) Speicher. The departure of TFF also left FOB Courage without a mission and consequently was scheduled for closure in the early summer. As if the logistics of moving the 29th’s entire network

operations center, also located on FOB Courage, were not intimidating enough, the closure also meant the relocation of many strategic communications links in the volatile greater Mosul area. In addition to the confluence of these external forces in the near future, the 29th faced more challenges yet.



The unit’s predecessors, the 16th Signal Battalion of Fort Hood, Texas, had been an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) MSE signal battalion with much greater band width capabilities. Despite the tactical nature of their communications assemblages, the 16th was able to provide a quality of service (QoS) beyond the capability of the 29th’s legacy



IN NEED OF TECHNOLOGY: Before TF Adler’s Commercialization project, the NC’s THSDN fielded routers’ memory reached 98%

Tactical High Speed Data Network (THSDN) flavor of MSE. Supported units had grown accustomed to far more demanding applications such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP),

Wave Radio (a multicast IP version of Combat Net Radio), Infoworkspace (IWS) collaboration suite and other high bandwidth or real-time applications. The 29th was just not able to provide the level of service commensurate with the demand of these applications.

The evidence of this fact came just days after the Relief in Place (RIP) wherein the NC’s THSDN fielded routers’ memory reached 98% utilization and frequently stalled communications. The message was clear - something had to be done. The leaders and Soldiers of the 29th coupled with TF Adler (22nd Signal Brigade), the unit’s higher headquarters, proved to be up to the challenge.

With the evidence of the THSDN architecture’s inability to support the demands of today’s warfighter displayed on the network monitoring tools at TF Adler’s network operations center everyday, an impetus to ameliorate the situation quickly formed. TF Adler’s Network Engineers decided to field a newer and enhanced

router to replace the lagging THSDN standard equipment to alleviate the immediate strain on the network before a broader strategy had been formed. Meanwhile, the 29th came up with solutions of its own. The battalion network technician upgraded key SENs supporting the end-user in addition to the NC router upgrade. This upgrade would boost the meager bandwidth links by 50%. While not a final resolution by any means, these two upgrades lifted the network out of despair and allowed supported units to conduct business. Still the fact remained; the 29th’s area of operations (AO) desperately needed an overhaul.

With the impending restructure of the MNB-NW/MND-N battlespace and the 29th’s legacy equipment the TF Adler leadership decided the thrust of the early commercialization effort would center on Mosul. The 29th Signal Battalion Task Force Commander ensured that his organization accorded with TF Adler issuing a revised Commander’s Intent emphasizing that a, “transition from tactical to a commercial network of FOB Diamondback /Marez, Sykes and Q’west hinges on our detailed planning and coordination with 22nd Signal Brigade.” Nothing less would suffice. The stage was set and the requirements were in place – build out

a new strategic presence at Mosul and get the users off the tactical systems and onto a yet-to-be constructed strategic local area network (LAN). In middle January 2006, transmission, circuits, and data engineers and planners busily set out to propose appropriate solutions to the obvious problems. The 29th Signal Battalion operations officer and staff seized the initiative, a theme that would resonate throughout operations conducted by the 29th, and guide the Mosul commercialization effort in a direction the 29th saw fit. The battalion submitted a plan



to the TF Adler Engineers and Network Operations

(NETOPS) and sought concurrence from TF BoB G6. The plan contained nine major phases that were generally conditions based and proceeded in logical sequence. The plan was not complicated nor a substantive departure from what had already been discussed. However, it did weave together several separate threads of planning

based on the limitations of the 29th capabilities, logistic challenges, and operational requirements.

The engineers then presented the plan to the TF Adler Commander who summarily approved it. With a plan to paper and approval from the TF Adler Commander, the 29th was ready to get to work.

Training

The TF Adler and 29th leaders had laid plans that would require the 29th to run a strategic Technical Control Facility (TCF), a mission for which a tactical signal battalion and Troposcatter (TROPO) Signal Company are inadequately trained. Back at Fort Lewis, WA from where the 29th hails, the unit had shown great foresight by deploying with two Promina P400 nodes and sent a team of Soldiers designated as the Promina Section to a training course. These

Soldiers would form the core around which a TCF team would be built. As for the other varied tasks involved in operating and maintaining

MORE THAN JUST SIGNAL: 29th Warfighters became proficient in Soldier tasks during the deployment to Iraq

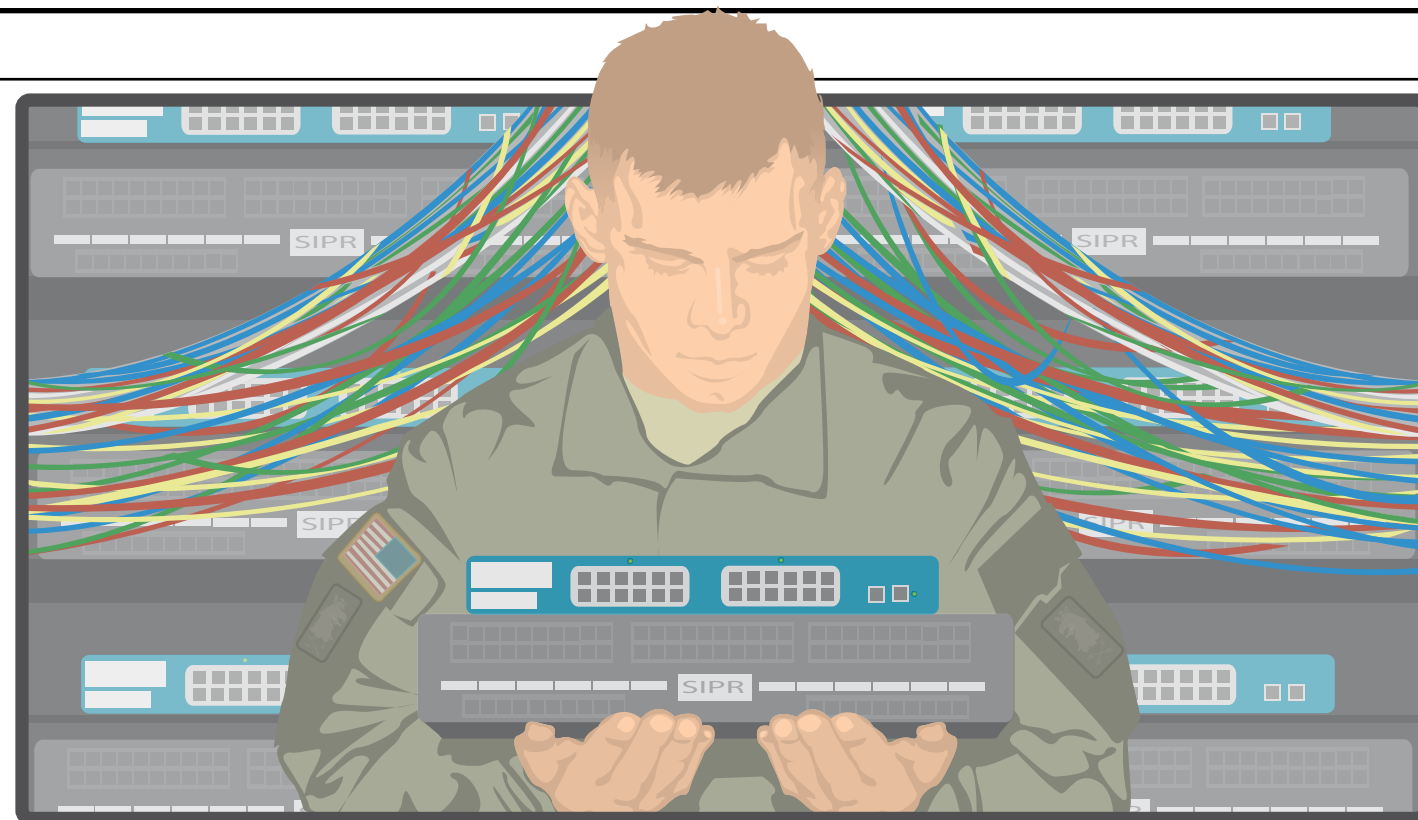
shelf (COTS) equipment and fiber installation. TF Adler leveraged their assets in the 29th's favor by offering courses from Baghdad Signal University (BSU) which the task force operated. The 29th quickly filled training slots beginning in January in anticipation of the upcoming mission. This training covered the operation of the TCF and much of the troubleshooting the team would have to complete, but installation of the fiber backbone would take an entirely different skill set. Again TF Adler leveraged available assets by opening up training offered by the Kuwait Iraq C4 Commercialization (KICC) project and Anteon contracted fiber experts. The 29th turned to their Cable and Wire Installer/Maintainers (MOS 25L) to receive this training and prepare to spearhead the installation of the LAN on FOB Diamondback and other locations. Through these courses, TF Adler and the 29th had successfully prepared previously untrained MSE Soldiers with the core skill set to operate and maintain the TCF as well as install the LAN.

Building a TCF from the ground up is a challenge in-and-of itself, let alone building a TCF in the logisti-

cally challenged Northwest. The condition of the facilities on FOB Diamondback at the outset of the transition was simply insufficient for a strategic TCF. As such, the 29th logisticians, led by the Battalion Executive Officer, began the process of acquiring and allocating resources to support the requirements. To renovate the ailing building designated for the TCF, the battalion enlisted the support of 557th Expeditionary REDHORSE Squadron (ERHS) to renovate the Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and structure itself. Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) was also solicited for making the building power infrastructure more robust and reliable.

Creating a hub around which the new LAN infrastructure could be built presented just one of the many tasks in planning for the migration of strategic services. The LAN itself still needed to be constructed. For this task, TF Adler hedged its bet prior to the approval of the final Mosul plan and dispatched the Anteon team, under the direction of the TF Adler Commercialization Officer, to conduct a site survey of Mosul. The site survey yielded a plan for the fiber runs that would form the LAN as well as a rough order of magnitude (ROM) list of materials needed to complete the project. Armed with this information, TF Adler resourced the 29th with materials on-hand and submitted a Purchase Request and Commitment (PR&C) for the difference.

SPC Lucas I. Baldwin



As the project became more complicated, the 29th assigned a project manager to spearhead the management of the disparate parts of the project ultimately leading to the full commercialization of Mosul. The project manager would facilitate information flow between the fiber team, the TCF team, TF Adler Commercialization Team, 29th Logisticians, and 29th Operations. This link proved crucial to the success of the commercialization mission. Mosul was not the only location in the 29th Signal Battalion Task Force's AO that required a TCF. Q'West already had a TCF in place from commercialization efforts predating the 29th's tenure. With the loss of contractor support at the TCF, the mission fell on the 842nd Signal Company, who were the only communicators assigned to the base. However, the 842nd is a Troposcatter Transmission Signal Company that is not tasked or prepared to manage a strategic TCF under normal circumstances. As a US Army Reserve unit, the 842nd did, however, bring unique skills from the civilian world that proved to be extremely useful. Many reservists held jobs with major telecommunications companies such as Bell South, Verizon, and L3 which provided them with a unique background in maintaining local and wide-area

communications networks. The 29th and TF Adler augmented this natural skill set the 842nd personnel possessed with training at BSU to specialize individuals on circuit-switched voice, Promina multiplexing, VOIP, and IP Networking. From automations to strategic circuits, the Q'West TCF team provided a broad range of communications support to Q'West even installing 30,000 ft. of fiber



Through their efforts, the 29th effectively reduced their manpower footprint by 80 percent.

optic cable to complete the LAN infrastructure. Within the first two months of operation, the 842nd Soldiers had installed three new Tier 1 circuits and a new NIPR VOIP Call Manager – tasks far beyond the scope of typical TROPO

operators. Operating this TCF also yielded valuable organizational knowledge into some of the training, equipment, and manning challenges the 29th would face in establishing a new facility at FOB Diamondback. As iron sharpens iron, the 842nd team helped make the greater 29th team and the new TCF a success.

After the migration of the first strategic circuits to the FOB Diamondback TCF in early March, the 29th's focus then shifted to the extension of these services onto a strategic LAN as opposed to tactical assemblages. During the preparations for the TCF initialization, the OSP team had been training hard under the direction of the Anteon team to install the Area Distribution Node (ADN) backbone at FOB Diamondback and FOB Marez. With that plan in mind and the training under their belt, the Cable and Wire Team, Anteon team, and 557th ERHS (who provided the trenching and digging capability) broke ground on a project that was completed in record time.

Concurrently, the cable and wire team conducted an extensive cable cleanup project on Diamondback and Marez to make room for the new architecture and improve services overall. It was not uncommon to encounter a, "rat's nest," of abandoned or damaged cable throughout the FOB from three years of previous units. Soldiers worked tirelessly to remove the haphazardly installed and aging cable and wire from buildings,

ground runs, and aerial runs. Through the project, the Soldiers recovered 158,400 ft. of WF-16 Wire and 26,400 feet of Category 5 UTP Cable (CAT5). Meanwhile, the cable and wire team made incredible progress on the backbone but was often stalled by equipment shortages and broken trenching equipment. Despite these obstacles to success, the cable and wire team diligently progressed installing the new backbone. By the time all the ADN's become operational, the Soldiers lifted approximately 2600 lbs. of CAT5 to install 120,000 ft. and laid another 73,920 ft. of fiber optic cable to complete the LAN.

During the intensive LAN construction project, the 29th staff continued to plan ahead for the development of information services out of the TCF. Microsoft Domain, Microsoft Exchange, and Anti-virus services fell into the realm of Multinational Corps Iraq (MNC-I) Enterprise Services division of the communications staff (C6). The progress in Mosul fit right in with MNC-I's concurrent but separate enterprise-wide effort to migrate off of untrusted domains to a common IRAQ domain. With MNC-I Enterprise services located at Camp Victory, TF Adler Automations OIC would serve as the link for the 29th to Enterprise Services and this broader plan. Back at Mosul, a SEN platoon became the newly formed Domain Transition team to handle the installation and operation of the information system servers in the TCF as well

as ease users' transition off of the MNBW domain onto the IRAQ domain.

After experiencing early setbacks, the team quickly gained experience and momentum tackling a given set of customers in two days – one day for preparation and validation, another for execution. The domain migration team spent countless hours validating user-level connectivity, deploying baseline images to customers' computers, and assisting in setting up the users' new email accounts. In fourteen days, the migration team had transitioned over 350 computers and 2,000 user accounts to the IRAQ domain. In essentially four months, TF Adler and the 29th had taken the FOB Diamondback TCF from concept to completion.

With the completion of a fully-functional TCF, the 29th shifted focus westward towards FOB Sykes. Although FOB Diamondback and Marez still required attention and improvement, the bulk of the planning and supplying had been completed and all that remained was execution. The role of FOB Sykes, meanwhile, changed continuously over the course of the Mosul commercialization. 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) originally occupied FOB Sykes, and was later replaced by 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division. Their stay proved to be short-lived when elements of 172nd SBCT based in Mosul replaced them after only a few months. Amidst the changing operational requirements, the Diamondback TCF continued to mature and extend more services. Under these new circumstances, TF

Adler Engineers and the 29th again worked together to create a plan for Sykes. Ultimately, the Engineers and 29th decided the best way to serve FOB Sykes given the constraints would be to extend services from Mosul as a Tier 2 Campus Extension.

The Anteon contractors diligently working at Mosul had also visited FOB Sykes in the original site survey of the region and prepared a commercial architecture for the requirements there. In light of the equipment shortfalls faced at Mosul, the 29th would not be able to complete a new commercial architecture at FOB Sykes as well. The TF Adler Commercialization team and 29th again found solutions to the problems faced now at Sykes with tactical commercialization. With the commercial assets they had on-hand and a combination of MSE transmission systems, the team would install Transmission Data Cases consisting of routers, switches, and encryption equipment to support the end user. This strategy would facilitate reducing the number of tactical assemblages and enhancing the services provided.

The 29th diligently set out to install as much commercial architecture as they could out of the new FOB Sykes TCF including 15,000 ft. of fiber, NIPR/SIPR data stacks, and NIPR/SIPR VOIP Call Managers. This TCF housed circuits tying them directly into the strategic services offered by the Diamondback TCF. These services enabled 29th to deploy

a total of eleven Transmission Data Cases. Some of these data cases deployed to the tumultuous city of Tal Afar on a short-notice mission to support TF BoB combat elements. This mission required training on another new piece of COTS equipment as yet unemployed by the 29th, free-space optics (FSO). The 29th again met the challenge head-on and quickly trained Soldiers to deploy into Tal Afar to set up this equipment. Without the timely extension of services from Mosul onto Sykes' burgeoning commercial infrastructure, this mission would have been far more

difficult to complete.

The End of the Road

Looking back on where the 29th came from after arriving in Mosul, it is simply astonishing to see the vast improvements made to the greater Mosul network. A tactical signal battalion untrained for the majority of the tasks that laid before them with limited resources transformed in response to the demands of the modern warfighter. Through their efforts, the 29th effectively reduced their tactical footprint from 132 to 36 assemblages and reduced the manpower

footprint by 80 percent.

As TF Adler and the 29th near redeployment, many smaller projects remain and constant improvements to the LAN and TCF continue.

However, the FOB Diamondback, FOB Sykes and Q'west TCFs will remain a testament to the superior teamwork, ingenuity, and tenacity of the 29th Signal Battalion, 842d Signal Company and TF Adler as long as there is an US presence in the Ninewa province of Iraq.



BURDEN

MSG(P) Ricardo A. Weems, the incoming Command Sergeant Major of Task Force Runner, stands alone before the assembled Soldiers representing his Task Force for the first time.

CSM Eric L. Willis passed on the duties of the senior enlisted member of the Multi National Corps-Iraq's Task Force Runner to MSG(P) Ricardo A. Weems in a ceremony here behind the Coalition Network Operations and Security Center here Sept 14.

Lonely at The Top

Task Force Runner commander Derek T. Orndorff said Willis had built a solid foundation, a can-do psyche that would be felt beyond the end of the battalion itself.

EMOTION

Task Force Adler S-3 Sergeant Major Basil Adams embraces former Task Force Runner Command Sergeant Major Eric L. Willis at the Task Force Adler Change of Responsibility Ceremony Sept 14.

“15 months ago on a bright sunshiny day on the parade field at Kelly barracks, I watched in awe as the soldiers of the 440th signal battalion executed the finest change of command ceremony I've seen in 20-plus years of service. It is an



440TH SIGNAL BATTALION



indelible example of the tremendous NCO leadership of this battalion, anchored in the foundation that is CSM Eric Willis. When you're told you're going to be a battalion commander, you begin to think about what you will need and expect from your right-hand man, the command sergeant Major. I wanted someone who shared my passion for high standards; who wanted Soldiers to succeed, who demanded professional and personal accountability, and who was fearless in confronting challenges. Command Ser-

LAST STAND

CSM Eric L. Willis, the outgoing Command Sergeant Major of Task Force Runner, stands before his 440th Runners for the final time



SALUTE

MSG Delane Colman orders his company to present arms during the National Anthem in Task Force Runner's Change of Responsibility ceremony



EVOLUTION

LTC Derek Orndorff passes the guidon to MSG(P) Ricardo A. Weems, symbolizing the transfer of authority over the Task Force

RESPONSIBILITY

MSG(P) Ricardo A. Weems stands before Task Force Runner as CSM Willis makes his farewell speech

geant Major Willis has exceeded every expectation I could have had for a command sergeant major,” said Orndorff.

Orndorff called Willis the man behind many of the recent achievements of Task Force Runner, citing the battalions quick reaction force, which he said had become the de facto standard for the base, even to the point of training members of the Multi-National-Corps-Iraq Command Sergeant Major’s personal security team.

Willis aimed most of his comments during the ceremony at praising and thanking his fellow leaders and the Soldiers and NCOs of Task Force Runner. “Now, the most important people in Iraq or Darmstadt are the Soldiers, NCOs, and officers of task force runner. No matter where you may be, thank you, because the past two years would not have been possible without you. Training for war, deploying and executing our combat mission. I always say soldiers are my credentials. I would also like to add, you are the secret to my success. On behalf of a grateful nation, again, I say thank you. And lastly, to MSG Weems. Take care of the Soldiers, and they will execute the mission.”

Willis’ next assignment will be the Command Sergeant Major of the 94th air defense artillery in Hawaii. Weems said he is eager to continue Willis’ high standard of leadership, and honored that he was chosen as

successor to his mentor and close personal friend. “For the Soldiers of the 440th Signal Battalion and Task Force Runner, I want to say you have done an outstanding job here in Iraq and I know you will continue to do the same on the redeployment. I am proud and honored to become the leader of such an outstanding group of Soldiers, NCOs, and officers. I know



we will continue to move forward and produce great work all the way up to inactivation.”

“The skills that Command Sergeant Major willis brought to the fight have been immesurable. Everything he touches turns to gold,” said Orndorff.

Master Sergeant Weems’ military education and NCOES training includes the Warrior Leader Course, Air Movement Operation Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Jump Master Course,

USAF Air Planner Course, Master Fitness Trainer Course and Advance Noncommissioned Officer Course.

He is three credit hours away from getting his Associates in Art from Fayetteville Technical Community College in North Carolina.

His state side assignments include 82D Signal Battalion, 327th Signal Battalion and 51st Signal Battalion at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

His overseas assignments include two tours with 122D Signal Battalion, Camp Red Cloud, Korea, and a tour to Germany with 121st Signal Battalion, Kitzengen, Germany.

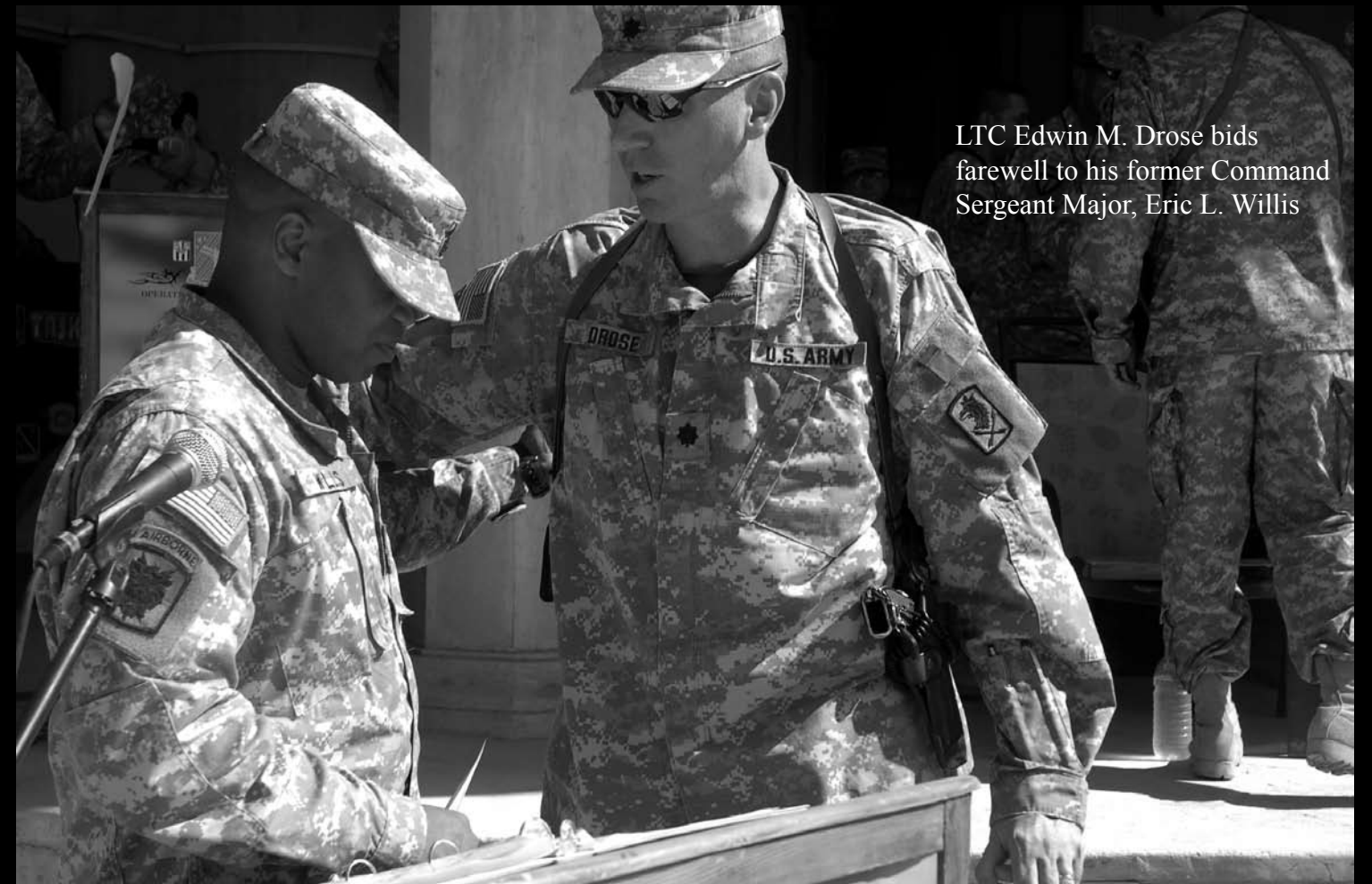
Among his military awards and decorations are: Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (1OLC), Army Commendation Medal (1SOLC & 2OLC), Joint Service Achievement, Army Achievement Medal (1OLC), National Defense Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, South West Asia Service Medal with three Bronze stars, Armed Forces Services Medal, Noncommissioned Officer

Professional Development Ribbon (Number 3), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (Number 3), Saudi Arabia Kuwait Liberation Medal, Kuwait Kuwait Liberation Medal, Global War Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and Global War Terrorism Service Medal.

Master Sergeant Ricardo A. Weems is married to the former April Deneen Nokes of Washington, D.C. They have two sons, Ricardo and Robert. They are 20 and 15 years of age.



The task Force Runner color guard holds the colors at present arms



LTC Edwin M. Drose bids farewell to his former Command Sergeant Major, Eric L. Willis



LAST RESPECTS

A crowd gathered in Baghdad to pay respects to SSG Mickey Ramos, who died in a mortar attack in 2005. In the Joint Network Operations Control Center – Iraq rededications ceremony, Soldiers came together pay tribute a final time by
SPC Michael Howard

TASK FORCE ADLER



From the youngest privates to generals and dignitaries, soldiers and civilians of all kinds came together Aug. 30 to honor SSG Miguel A. Ramos at the Joint Network Operations Control Center-Iraq here. Ramos, 39, of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, died in Baghdad, Iraq on May 31, 2005 when an enemy rocket impacted near his position. He

was assigned to the Army Reserve's 807th Signal Company, 35th Signal Battalion, Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico. Under a glaring sun, Victory Base Soldiers spoke fondly of Ramos, and dedicated the JNCC-I in tribute to the fallen Soldier. "SSG Ramos was a humble man, he had a great sense of humor, he liked poetry, and played the

guitar. He loved to share his songs with Soldiers. We never will forget his smile or his advice," said MG Dennis E. Lutz, commander, 335th Theater Signal Command, Multi-National Corps-Iraq., "He will not be forgotten.

SSG Ramos served with honor as all of you do today." "It is fitting that this building be dedicated to SSG Ramos today. May God bless the Ramos family and may they know that we in this



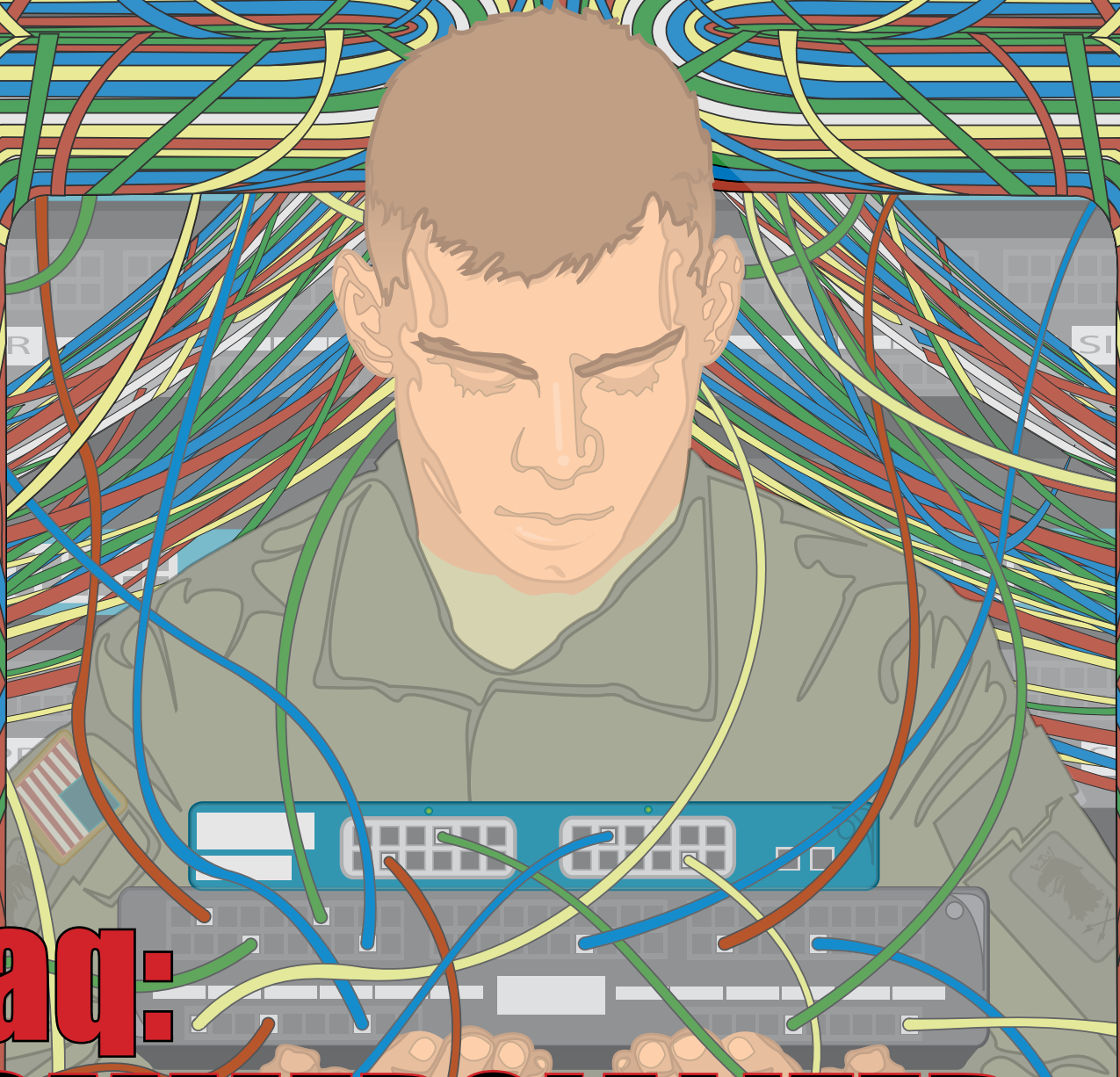
COL Frederick A. Cross, MG Dennis E. Lutz, and BG Gary S. Connor cut the ribbon symbolizing the reopening of the Joint Network Operations Control Center-Iraq

place will never forget," added BG Gary S. Connor, deputy chief of staff, Communications and Information Systems,

Multi-National Force-Iraq. After Senior leaders shared their impressions and remembrances

with the audience, Lutz and LTC Maureen J. O'Connor, director of the JNCC-I unveiled a new building sign, which read "Dedicated in memory of SSG Miguel (Mickey) Ramos." The ceremony drew to a

close with a ribbon-cutting signifying the reopening of the building. Before the ensuing reception, a painted portrait of Ramos was unveiled along the building's hallway.



Iraq:
COMMERCIALIZED
Task Force Adler Heads Home